

During this holiday season,
as we share time, love, and laughter
with family and friends,
may we reflect on the many gifts
we have found in sobriety—
through fellowship with each other
and through the God
of our understanding.



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■ Call for Stories Focused on Spirituality

In response to the 2010 General Service Conference recommendation that “the trustees’ Committee on Literature develop literature which focuses on spirituality that includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are successfully sober in Alcoholics Anonymous...,” the trustee’s Literature Committee is seeking stories from A.A. members.

The trustees are looking for stories that reflect a wide-range of spiritual experiences from A.A. members who, with any belief or non-belief, have found a solution to the concept of spirituality and sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Manuscripts should be 500-800 words, double spaced. Please attach your name and address on a separate piece of paper. The anonymity of all authors will be observed, whether or not their story is selected for publication. Please send sharing, by February 15, 2011, to: Literature Coordinator, General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163, or e-mail: literature@aa.org.

■ Reminder: Résumés for Trustees Election due Jan. 1, 2011

Three new Class B (alcoholic) trustees—from the Southwest and Northeast regions, and trustee-at-large/Canada—will be elected at the General Service Conference in May 2011. Résumés must be received at G.S.O. no later than January 1, 2011, and must be submitted by delegates only.

The new Southwest regional trustee will succeed Conley B., of Redfield, Arkansas; the new Northeast regional will follow John K., of Collingswood, New Jersey. The next trustee-at-large/Canada will succeed Jo-Anne L., of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Please submit your candidate’s résumé to the Secretary, trustees’ Nominating Committee, General Service Office.

■ Deadline for Directories

In order to be included in the 2011 Regional Directories, group updates made via Fellowship New Vision (FNV) should be completed by May 13, 2011.

Hard copy updates should be received at the G.S.O. Records department no later than May 6, 2011 to be included.

■ Literature Appointed Committee Member

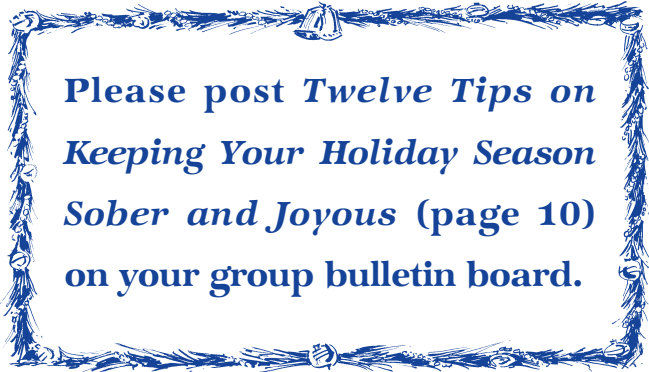
The trustees’ Committee on Literature has two openings for appointed committee members. We are searching for appropriate individuals to fill these position and would appreciate any recommendations.

Some of the qualities most desirable are:

- Expertise and familiarity with the use of current technology and communication tools.
- Activity in A.A. service, especially strong experience in carrying the message through literature.
- Availability for meetings of this trustees’ committee held during General Service Board weekends (usually the last weekend in January, July and October), as well as one meeting during the General Service Conference in May.
- At least five years of continuous sobriety.
- The ability to work within the committee structure.
- Past General Service Conference delegates are not eligible to apply for the opening until one year after their last Conference.

In seeking applications for all vacancies in Alcoholics Anonymous, the Fellowship is committed to creating a large applicant file of qualified persons which reflects the inclusiveness and diversity of A.A. itself.

To obtain a résumé form for this opening please call the Literature desk at G.S.O. (212) 870-3019, or e-mail literature@aa.org. Deadline for applications is Dec. 15, 2010.



Please post *Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous* (page 10) on your group bulletin board.

American Medical Association Honored with Milestone Big Book

Honoring a relationship that has sustained itself over the course of many decades, Alcoholics Anonymous recently presented the 30-millionth copy of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, to the American Medical Association at A.A.'s 75th Anniversary International Convention in San Antonio, Texas, on Sunday, July 4th, 2010.

"The AMA has long recognized alcoholism as a disease requiring adequate treatment," said the Very Reverend Ward Ewing, D.D., chairperson of A.A.'s General Service Board, "and this has helped A.A. erase stereotypes and spread the message of sobriety and fellowship."

Since its publication in 1939, *Alcoholics Anonymous* has pointed the way to a life of comfortable sobriety for thousands of suffering alcoholics who otherwise might not have found help, offering convincing evidence to relatives and friends that compulsive drinkers can recover; and sharing insights for physicians, psychologists, members of the clergy and other professionals who work with alcoholics.

Accepting the honor on behalf of the AMA, immediate-past chair of the AMA Board of Trustees Rebecca Patchin, M.D., noted, "The AMA is honored to be recognized for the work we do to help address alcohol abuse. A.A. has been able to touch and improve the lives of people around the world and has led the fight against this destructive disease."

Individually, throughout A.A.'s history, many in the healing profession have provided medical knowledge and support as A.A. grew in its ability to help the suffering alcoholic. Dr. Silkworth's contribution in articulating alcoholism as an allergy to alcohol coupled with an obsession to drink helped to set Bill W. on the road to recovery. Sister Ignatia, the frail nurse at St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, ministered to literally thousands of drunks as they sobered up on the alcoholic ward in that city. Dr. E.M. Jellinek was instrumental in organizing the Yale School for Alcohol Studies, out of which evolved the National Council on Alcoholism, today known as the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, which brought national attention to the realities of alcoholism as a medical, not a moral, problem. And, of course, there was Dr. Bob, A.A.'s beloved cofounder who, along with Sister Ignatia, treated, encouraged and counseled innumerable alcoholics in his pioneering time.

Yet, as a body, there were few organizations in the medical realm that were willing to address alcoholism head-on in the early years of A.A.'s existence. From a medical standpoint, alcoholism—and alcoholics—meant nothing but trouble. Emotionally, physically, spiritually and medically problematic, alcoholics often wore out their welcome with the hospitals and professionals who tried to help them.

The AMA's Council on Mental Health, however, in a 1956 "Resolution on Hospitalization for Patients with

Alcoholism" from its Committee on Alcoholism, tried to redress the negative association many physicians and hospitals had toward alcoholics:

"One of the most consistent complaints of physicians who wish to care for these patients is that many hospitals will not admit such patients with a diagnosis of alcoholism. Many feel that these people are intractable, uncooperative, and difficult to handle. Because of their untoward behavior, hospital authorities feel that they are not equipped to take care of the medical treatment of such overactive patients. Where such patients are unruly and uncooperative, this attitude is understandable. However, for many of these sick people who express a wish to be



Bill Clark, M.D., former Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee, presented the 30-millionth copy of Alcoholics Anonymous to Rebecca Patchin, M.D.

treated in a general hospital, it has generally been found that cooperation is forthcoming and that no special attention or equipment is necessary for treating these patients. Hospitals should be urged to consider admission of such patients with a diagnosis of alcoholism based upon the condition of the individual patient rather than a general objection to all such patients. Such objections have been very frustrating for physicians who wish to treat these patients and often discourages them from taking a greater interest in alcoholics."

Going further, the Council's Committee on Alcoholism requested that the AMA's Council on Mental Health urge hospital administrators and staffs "to look upon alcoholism as a medical problem and to admit patients who are alcoholics to their hospitals for treatment." The committee also stated that "chronic alcoholism should not be considered as an illness which bars admission to a hospital, but rather as a qualification for admission.... The chronic alcoholic in an acute phase can be, and often is, a medical emergency."

This resolution on hospitalization was ultimately passed unanimously in 1956 by the AMA House of Delegates, which represented a tremendous victory, as the largest medical organization in the world now recognized alcoholism as an illness warranting admission to general hospitals.

In a time when alcoholism was referred to, even by A.A. members themselves, as a "malady," an "affliction," an "allergy," the acknowledgment of a major medical

institution that alcoholism was, at the very least, a “medical problem” was a step forward. While the term “disease” was never used by the AMA—a term that carried with it many implications in terms of insurance premiums, apportionment of federal funds, and other legal considerations along with questions of volition, responsibility and accountability—the organization continued its foundation-building efforts urging physicians and hospitals to treat alcoholic patients from the medical viewpoint.

A series of articles was prepared strictly for the medical profession and published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, detailing the medical, physiological, psychiatric, and sociological aspects of alcoholism. Soon, a curriculum for teaching alcoholism in medical schools was completed by the committee and distributed to every medical school in the country. In 1961 a statement was drawn up in reference to drivers and their ability to drive under the influence that established authoritative standards for levels of alcohol concentration in the blood.

These and other advances set the stage in 1966, in Las Vegas, Nevada, for a watershed moment in the field of alcoholism where a resolution was drafted by the AMA and ultimately passed a year later in Houston, Texas, declaring alcoholism a disease that merits serious concern of all members of the health professions.

The official resolution in 1967 resolved “that the American Medical Association identifies alcoholism as a complex disease and as such recognizes that the medical components are medicine’s responsibility. Such recognition is not intended to relieve the alcoholic of moral and legal responsibility, as provided by law, for any acts committed when inebriated; nor does this recognition preclude civil arrest and imprisonment, as provided by law, for antisocial acts committed when inebriated.”

From this seminal moment nearly 45 years ago, many professional medical, religious and legal organizations around the world have come to recognize alcoholism as a disease, as well, clearing the way for greater understanding in the general public and greater availability of treatment options at both the public and private level.

Having addressed alcoholism directly as a disease and articulated medicine’s responsibility in caring for alcoholics, the AMA also recognized in that same year the part played by Alcoholics Anonymous, stating that membership in A.A. was still the most effective means of treating alcoholism and quoting Dr. Ruth Fox, an eminent authority on alcoholism: “With its thousands of groups and its 300,000 recovered alcoholics [now upwards of 2,000,000], A.A. has undoubtedly reached more cases than all the rest of us together. For patients who can and will accept it, A.A. may be the only form of therapy needed.”

Additionally, Dr. Marvin A. Block, a member of the AMA’s original Committee on Alcoholism, noted: “Perhaps the most effective treatment in the rehabilitation of the alcoholic is a philosophy of living which is compatible with the individual and his family, an absorbing faith in himself which comes only after he has learned to

understand himself, and a close association with others whose experiences parallel his own. The physician’s cooperation with Alcoholics Anonymous is one way of obtaining these things for his patient.”

The cooperation between A.A. and the professional communities has continued to flourish throughout the years since the AMA’s watershed resolution, and presentation of the 30-millionth copy of *Alcoholics Anonymous* symbolized how the spirit of cooperation can benefit the still-suffering alcoholic and bring recovery nearer for all those who want it.

■ William Duncan Silkworth: ‘The Little Doctor Who Loved Drunks’

Bill W. frequently said that the A.A. program owed much to both religion and medicine. He would credit the Oxford Group and Dr. Sam Shoemaker for the religious contribution while also pointing out that our spiritual principles were ancient and universal, the common property of mankind.

As for the medical contribution, he gave much of the credit to Dr. William Duncan Silkworth, the physician who had treated him at New York’s Towns Hospital in 1934. His gratitude to Silky, as he called him, seemed almost boundless, and in the doctor’s final years Bill even sought to aid him financially. Beyond that, Bill made sure that A.A. members would always remember Silkworth as “the little doctor who loved drunks.”

What were Dr. Silkworth’s main contributions to Bill and to A.A.? There were several. One important gift was in schooling Bill about the deadly, incurable nature of alcoholism as “an allergy of the body coupled with an obsession of the mind.” Dr. Silkworth would become an advocate of the belief that alcoholism has a physical cause as well as mental and emotional causes. He would defend this belief in medical journal articles.



His second contribution was a sympathetic, helpful response to the spiritual illumination which Bill had at Towns Hospital in December 1934, an experience that set Bill on the road to permanent sobriety and changed his life forever.

After Bill’s release from the hospital, Silkworth also gave him permission to visit Towns Hospital and

tell his story to other alcoholic patients, a practice that eventually became our tradition of “carrying the message.” While today it’s commonplace for A.A. members to visit hospitalized alcoholics, Dr. Silkworth was taking a professional risk by permitting Bill to do this in 1935.

Then, when A.A. became a movement and published the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, Silkworth’s article, “The Doctor’s Opinion,” appeared at the beginning and has been in every edition of the book since.

Finally, Dr. Silkworth continued as a friend and ally of A.A. and recommended the program to patients and other doctors in the field. In looking over this record, one could say that he was the right person at the right time for what Bill and A.A. needed.

William Duncan Silkworth was, by training and temperament, the kind of doctor who was likely to be drawn to the difficult practice of treating alcoholics. Born in Brooklyn in 1873, he had shown an early interest in medical science and was soon interested in the emotional and mental side of the field. He was by nature a compassionate person who would have displayed deep concern for his patients no matter what specialty he chose to work in.

In 1892, he enrolled at Princeton University (then known as the College of New Jersey). He proved to be a diligent student and in 1896 began medical-school training at Bellevue Hospital, which later became affiliated with New York University. This was the ideal starting place for a medical career that would specialize in treating alcoholism and drug addiction, though that might not have been his goal in the beginning. However, as the A.A. Grapevine noted after his death in 1951, it was found while he worked at Bellevue that he was drawn to alcoholics, and they to him.

“When nobody else could calm a disturbed drunk, Dr. Silkworth could,” the Grapevine noted. “And he found, rather to his amazement, that even the toughest and most case-hardened of drunks would talk to him freely—and that many of them, even more amazingly, wept. It became evident that he exerted—or that there was exerted through him—some kind of thawing influence on the frozen life-springs of the alcoholic.”

In 1902, he married Marie Antoinette Bennett, who would be his lifelong companion in a very strong marriage. They had only one child, a son who died a week after birth.

Despite his outstanding training and skills, Dr. Silkworth had some years of discouragement before he discovered his true calling. Though he tried private practice, he did discover that working regularly in hospitals was more suitable. During World War I, he spent two years on the psychiatric staff of the U.S. Army hospital in Plattsburgh, N.Y. By coincidence this was the same military base where Bill W. received his officer training, though he and Dr. Silkworth never met during that period. Dr. Silkworth also spent several years on the staff of the Neurological Institute of New York’s

Presbyterian Hospital, now known as Columbia-Presbyterian. For a time, he was well paid, and appeared to be on the path to considerable wealth.

But the stock market crash of 1929 wiped out Dr. Silkworth’s savings, and he was forced to take a position at Charles B. Towns Hospital at \$40 a week, Bill would later recall. Seemingly a great setback in his career, this turned out to be one of those proverbial blessings in disguise. It launched him fulltime as a doctor specializing in the treatment of alcoholism and drug addiction. One outcome of this connection would be having Bill W. as a patient and giving him important advice and assistance.

Bill, in his personal story, would describe Towns Hospital as a nationally-known hospital for the mental and physical rehabilitation of alcoholics. He was referred to it by his brother-in-law, Dr. Leonard Strong. “Under the so-called belladonna treatment my brain cleared,” Bill wrote, about his first stay at Towns. “Hydrotherapy and mild exercise helped much. Best of all, I met a kind doctor who explained that though certainly selfish and foolish, I had been seriously ill, bodily and mentally.”

This was the beginning of their friendship, and at first Dr. Silkworth felt that Bill showed great promise of achieving sobriety. Very few of his patients were actually staying sober over the long term, but he never gave up hope. Bill, possessing new knowledge about the nature of his alcoholism, left the hospital with the belief that he had the problem whipped. Self-knowledge would save him.

But Bill drank again and had to return to Towns for a second time. “This was the finish, the curtain, it seemed to me,” he wrote. “My weary and despairing wife was informed that it would all end with heart failure during delirium tremens, or I would develop a wet brain, perhaps within a year. She would soon have to give me over to the undertaker or the asylum.”

Released again from Towns Hospital, Bill stayed sober for a while and then started what turned out to be his last drunk, in November 1934. When he returned to Towns a third time, in December, he was desperately considering a spiritual program that an old friend had brought him. During this stay, he had the dazzling spiritual experience that he described in his Big Book story. When Bill explained the experience to Silkworth, the doctor replied: “Something has happened to you I don’t understand. But you had better hang on to it. Anything is better than the way you were.”

Bill, after leaving the hospital, began carrying his message to other alcoholics, usually by telling about his spiritual experience and insisting that the same thing could happen for them. His prospects failed to get sober, however, and after a time Dr. Silkworth suggested he might have more success by letting up on the preaching and then focusing on the medical side of their condition—that they had an incurable ailment and could never drink safely again.

Somewhat chastened, Bill toned down his approach just before leaving for Akron, where destiny would put him in touch with Dr. Bob S. It's ironic that Bill, a layman, would pass this medical knowledge on to Dr. Bob, who was a well-trained physician. But it worked and Dr. Bob, after one more excursion into alcohol, stayed sober for the rest of his life and virtually launched A.A. in the Midwest, where it had considerable early growth.

Returning to New York City, Bill started a group there that included alcoholics treated at Towns Hospital. He continued to present Dr. Silkworth's belief that alcoholism is an allergic reaction—a view that prevails today in A.A. In 1937, Dr. Silkworth authored two articles in a professional journal called *Medical Record* advocating this then-controversial view of the condition. He also noted that a new approach called “moral psychology” was helping some alcoholics achieve sobriety. This was an obvious reference to Bill's work. Dr. Silkworth later expanded on this theme in a 1939 article in another medical publication called *The Journal-Lancet*. And while “allergy” is still not used in medical circles as a cause of alcoholism, there is now a preponderance of evidence that the condition has a physical component.

Dr. Silkworth continued his work at Towns Hospital and in 1945 also began treating patients at Knickerbocker Hospital for the last six years of his life.

By 1951, Dr. Silkworth still appeared reasonably healthy and able to practice. But at 78 he was slowing down, and had no pension or other resources for retirement. So Bill came up with an excellent plan that would enable the doctor to continue practicing while he and his wife could live in comfortable circumstances. Through his contacts in the alcoholism-treatment field, Bill learned that a center near Dublin, New Hampshire, needed a medical director. As Bill saw it, this could be a retirement position for the doctor. It would give the Silkworths a residence at the equivalent of a mountain resort, while giving the center the benefit of the doctor's professional training and experience with alcoholism. Bill also developed a plan to raise money for the treatment center to help make it a financially solvent enterprise.

It was undoubtedly a good plan, but before the change could be completed, Dr. Silkworth died of a heart attack on March 22, 1951. His obituary was published in *The New York Times* with mention of his service to A.A. The Alcoholic Foundation (later known as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous) also issued a tribute, which Bill probably authored, describing the doctor as “the first friend and perhaps the greatest friend of Alcoholics Anonymous.”

The tribute went on to acknowledge that he gave deep understanding and great encouragement to an infant society in the days when a lack of understanding or a word of discouragement might have killed it. “He was a saintly man.... He was able to save lives that were otherwise beyond help of any kind. Such a man cannot really die. Our friend has only left us...for a while.”

■ 2011 Regional Forums

Regional Forums strengthen the Fellowship's Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service by providing an opportunity for A.A. group and area representatives, as well as any interested individual A.A.s in a particular region, to share experience, strength and hope with representatives of the General Service Board and G.S.O. and Grapevine staff members. There is no registration fee for Regional Forums, they are hosted by the General Service Board and coordinated by G.S.O.

These weekend sharing sessions enhance and widen communication, and help spark new ideas in better carrying the message through service work.

Mailings regarding each Regional Forum are sent to area committee members, delegates, DCM's, and central offices and intergroups approximately six months ahead of time. On-line registration is also available.

The final Regional Forum in 2010 is in the Southeast region, December 10-12, at Springmaid Beach Resort and Conference Center, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. In 2011 Regional Forums are planned as follows:

- *Northeast*—May 20-22, Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center, Sturbridge, Massachusetts
- *Pacific (Additional)*—August 19-21, Warner Center Marriott, Woodland Hills, California
- *West Central*—September 9-11, Clarion Hotel & Conference Center, Davenport, Iowa
- *Southwest*—October 7-9, Hilton Wichita Airport Executive Conference Center, Wichita, Kansas
- *East Central*—November 11-13, Holiday Inn-Dayton Mall, Miamisburg, Ohio

■ New Position at G.S.O.

The General Service Office is pleased to announce that Doug R. has accepted the position of Director of Staff Services, effective October 1, 2010. Doug's primary responsibility will be to provide oversight and management of G.S.O.'s A.A. staff members and coordinating the services that support this division. Among his other managerial duties, Doug will work on various projects with the general manager, with the General Service Board and continue as assistant secretary to the General Service Board. Doug joined the G.S.O. staff in 1996 and has served on nine G.S.O. assignments, most recently, as Staff coordinator.

Rick W., now that his assignment as International Convention coordinator is successfully completed, will assume the position of Staff Coordinator/Web Services. He will be taking over a number of responsibilities from Doug's former Staff coordinator assignment as well as additional duties reflected in his position title. The importance of communication with the Fellowship through

G.S.O.'s A.A. Web site has been steadily increasing over the years. As we move ahead with exploring ways to make our A.A. literature and services more readily available through e-technology, it has become evident we need to include expanded internal oversight of these activities by the General Service Office staff. In line with this, Rick will function as the G.S.O. Web site liaison and sit on both the Interoffice Web site Committee (IOWC) and the G.S.O. E-Technology Committee. In addition, he will become a director on the A.A. World Services Board, and serve as liaison to Intergroups and Central Offices.

■ World Service Meeting in Mexico City

Fifty-three delegates from 32 countries gathered in Mexico City for the 21st World Service Meeting (WSM), October 17-21. Portugal and Estonia were first time attendees at this meeting.

Since its beginnings in 1969 the WSM has served as a forum for the worldwide sharing of experience and ideas on ways to carry the A.A. message of recovery. The event alternates biennially between New York City and other locations around the globe, and has convened in such diverse cities as Auckland, New Zealand; Cartagena, Colombia; Malahide, Ireland; and Helsinki, Finland.

The theme for the 2010 WSM was "Sponsorship: Our Responsibility," and discussion topics included: Women in A.A., A.A. and the Internet, and the Seventh Tradition. There were workshops on a variety of subjects. The main sessions were conducted in English and Spanish, with simultaneous translations. Attendance was limited to elected delegates from the participating countries. Warren S., G.S.O. staff member on the International desk, was the coordinator of this event.



Independence Monument, Mexico City.

The WSM's success in bringing together A.A. world-wide service centers for biennial meetings during the past three decades reflects a final vision of A.A. co-founder Bill W., who believed there could be "one world of A.A." to assure that help will always be available for sick alcoholics wherever they are or whatever language they speak. A 1950 visit to A.A. groups in Britain and Europe convinced him that A.A. could cross all of the barriers that had "divided and shattered the world of our time." The first WSM gathering was slightly more than a year before Bill W.'s death.

The 22nd World Service Meeting will be held in New York City, October 21-25, 2012.

■ A.A. and Self-Support

"It happens all the time," says Constance Ivey, supervisor of G.S.O.'s contributions department, talking about contributions sent in to the General Service Office by people who are not A.A. members themselves. "We usually get a couple of these kinds of donations each week," she says. "Normally it's about fifty dollars, a hundred dollars, three hundred dollars. But this one was unusual," she continues, describing a particular contribution recently received at the General Service Office. Like many of the non-A.A. contributions, this was from a family member, a son, on behalf of his father, who had gotten sober in A.A. "The son wanted us to know that the Fellowship had done wonders for his father and he hoped that the money from his father's estate would help us 'continue the good work' we've been doing." It's a sentiment the contributions department hears with some regularity. The check, however, was for \$100,000.

To most organizations, this kind of windfall would promote a giddy sense of excitement. In A.A.'s contributions department, it gave rise instead to a humble sense of appreciation. "Our organization is about helping people not to drink," says Constance, a nonalcoholic herself. "And people are very grateful for that."

The check, of course, like all others from non-A.A. members, regardless of the amount, had to be returned, along with a kind and grateful letter from a G.S.O. staff member, describing A.A.'s Seventh Tradition and explaining the spiritual benefits of self-support. Said the letter, in part, "We are sad to learn of your father's death and appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity in wishing to show gratitude for A.A. by way of a contribution to the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous.

"The A.A. Fellowship is guided by the Twelve Traditions, one of which reads as follows: 'Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.' This Tradition helps us to become more responsible, and means that we do not accept donations from anyone who is not an A.A. member, even memorials

given in memory of an A.A. member.

“We are returning your check in the amount of \$100,000 with gratitude. Thank you for the esteem in which you hold the A.A. Fellowship. We are grateful that your father found a sober way of living in A.A., and we extend our deepest sympathy to you.”

While few in A.A. would argue that money is unimportant or that sobriety can have a profound impact only on A.A. members, experience has shown how the principle of self-support is central to the Fellowship’s ability to produce incalculable spiritual dividends. By relying on its own members for financial support, the Fellowship assures a clear-eyed focus on its principal task, that of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. As Bill W. noted in 1946, “Money is not the lifeblood of A.A. With us, it is very secondary.... The core of our A.A. procedure is one alcoholic talking to another, whether that be sitting on a curbstone, in a home, or at a meeting. It’s the message, not the place; it’s the talk, not the alms.”

In addition to the policy of not accepting donations from nonmembers, the General Service Board also has a maximum of \$3,000 that individual A.A. members themselves may contribute annually, or bequeath on a one-time basis.

“We return a lot of money,” says Constance, recognizing how important the principle of self-support is to A.A.’s past, present, and future. “We survive because A.A. members keep us going,” she says.

■ Seventh Tradition Stories Sought

As a result of a 2010 General Service Conference Advisory Action, submissions of personal stories are being sought that humanize the impact of Seventh Tradition monies. This is for the purpose of communicating with the Fellowship about Self-support. These stories would be for possible inclusion in new or existing literature.

Manuscripts should be 500–800 words, double spaced. Please send submissions, by February 15, 2011, to the CFO at General Service Office, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 or by e-mail, to literature@aa.org.

■ “A.A. and the Armed Services” — Call for Stories

In response to the 2010 General Service Conference Advisory Action that “the trustee’s Literature Committee update the pamphlet ‘A.A. and the Armed Services’ to include recent experiences from members on active duty and a section which focuses on veterans of the armed services...,” the trustee’s Literature Committee is seeking stories from A.A. members.

Manuscripts should be 500–800 words, double spaced. Please attach your name and address on a separate piece of paper. The anonymity of all authors will be observed, whether or not their story is selected for publication. Please send your sharing, by February 15, 2011, to: Literature Coordinator, General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163, or e-mail: literature@aa.org.

■ Holiday Gift Ideas

If you are stumped for gift ideas for A.A. friends, sponsor or sponsees, we offer a few suggestions.

Available until current supplies run out is the souvenir book from the recent International Convention in San Antonio, a commemorative paperback edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, for \$7.00, in English (B-59), French (FB-59) and Spanish (SB-59).

New from the Grapevine is *Spiritual Awakening II*, stories from the A.A. Grapevine (GV-23; \$10.95).

A special gift is a boxed set of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th edition, and *Experience, Strength & Hope* (B-11; \$13), which contains the 56 stories dropped when new editions of the Big Book were produced. These stories, which have been unavailable for years, are now rejoined in this volume. The boxed set comes with a 16-page booklet on the history of the writing of the Big Book. A single volume of *Experience, Strength & Hope* (B-20) is \$5.00.

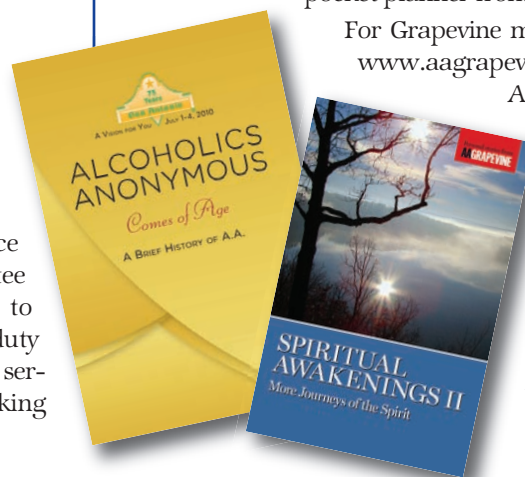
Another item that many might not be aware of is the abridged Big Book on CD (M-81A; \$18.00).

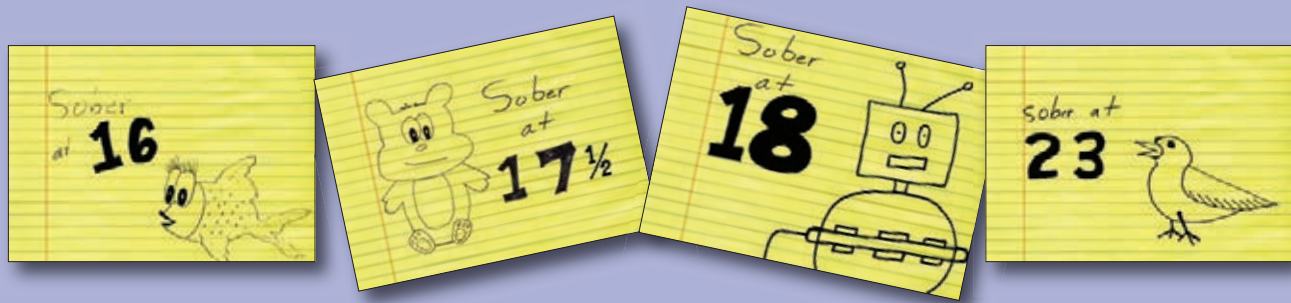
Subscriptions to *Box 4-5-9* (\$6 a year for 10 copies of each issue) and the A.A. Grapevine (\$26.97) have for years been popular gift ideas. For Spanish-speaking A.A.s there is *La Viña* (\$12.00).

Also from the Grapevine is the wall calendar (\$9.00), with photographs and brief quotes selected from Grapevine articles. The quotes aren’t directly related to either A.A. or alcoholism, so the calendar may be displayed anonymously. There is also the pocket planner from the Grapevine (\$4.75).

For Grapevine material check online at www.aagrapevine.org, or write to

AA Grapevine, Grand Central Station, Box 1980, New York, NY 10163-1980. The other items can be ordered through your local intergroup or central office or from G.S.O. Shipping charges may apply.





■ The 2010 “Young People’s Animation Video” has arrived!

Look for it on G.S.O.’s Web site: <http://www.aa.org/lang/en/subpage.cfm?page=398>. Click on “Young People’s Animation Video.”

- You may order all 5 Young People’s Videos (DVD-16), which is a combination of all the 2009 current Young People’s DVD with 4 videos and the new 2010 “Young People’s Animation Video.”
- Or, for service committees, you may order 4 separate 4 ½ minute “Animation” videos in one package. (DVD-15).

■ Cooperation Between Areas and Parole Representatives

Since A.A.’s beginning, cooperation with the professional community has been an important objective in the growth of our Fellowship. When the first A.A.s began appearing before judges to explain how the A.A. program could help the hapless drunks cycling in and out of the courtroom, they were cooperating with professionals.

A shining example of this type of cooperation took the form of a joint meeting between California Areas of A.A. and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation—Division of Adult Parole Operations in October 2009. A.A. trusted servants from up and down California gathered to discuss how A.A. can best serve the incarcerated population and those about to be paroled. A difference between the methods of early drunks meeting professionals and the alcoholics of today is that today’s drunks are well-armed with the experience of those who came before. And this experience is available in the form of service material and literature from G.S.O.

According to the A.A. Guidelines on Cooperating With the Professional Community, “A.A. is considered by many professionals to be a valuable resource for alcoholics who want help. When there is a good working relationship between A.A. members and professionals in the community. . . the sick alcoholic is the winner—he or she gets the help needed from both.” As Melody T., from Area 07, California Northern Interior, can attest, that is very true. In the current economic climate, Melody reported, A.A. is relied upon more than ever by correctional professionals, in particular those in the Division of Adult Parole Operations. In California, so many programs have been cut, Melody said, that parole officials are anxious to utilize

A.A. to the fullest extent. One parole official reported that in California, the parole population may be increased by the Early Release Program. Recidivism is expected to be high, as budget constraints have eliminated many drug and alcohol programs in the prisons, and have closed many of the transitional programs for parolees in the community. In addition, an official for the Board of Parole Hearings reported that because of current legal changes resulting from the budget crisis in California, there will be a large number of inmates released without going through the parole process. According to this official, community-based programs will be very important in the change that is coming. A.A. is considered by the Board of Parole Hearings to be an important resource.

Using service literature as their guide, A.A.s were able to inform parole representatives about what A.A. does and does not do, the importance of anonymity, the non-professional nature of A.A. meetings and sponsorship, the availability of the Bridging the Gap program, and the option of having P.I. Committees provide presentations prior to inmates’ release dates.

Melody acknowledged that the success of this meeting was due to many factors, one being the availability of service material, such as the C.P.C. Workbook, information for professionals, and pamphlets. “We follow the experience of those who came before us,” Melody said.

A new service piece, specifically for judges, attorneys, probation officers, court-appointed counselors, and other referring professionals for Cooperation With the Professional Community committees is available from the General Service Office. The information sheet, titled “Alcoholics Anonymous as a Resource For Drug & Alcohol Court Professionals,” clearly defines how A.A. can be a resource, what A.A. does, and what A.A. does not do.

Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous

Holiday parties without liquid spirits may still seem a dreary prospect to new A.A.s. But many of us have enjoyed the happiest holidays of our lives sober—an idea we would never have dreamed of, wanted, or believed possible when drinking. Here are some tips for having an all-round ball without a drop of alcohol.



1 *Line up extra A.A. activities for the holiday season.* Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at a clubhouse or central office, speak, help with dishes, or visit the alcoholic ward at a hospital.



2 *Be host to A.A. friends, especially newcomers.* If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a diner and spring for the coffee.



3 *Keep your A.A. telephone list with you all the time.* If a drinking urge or panic comes—postpone everything else until you've called an A.A.



4 *Find out about the special holiday parties, meetings, or other celebrations*

given by groups in your area, and go. If you're timid, take someone newer than you are.



5 *Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about.* Remember how clever you were at excuses when drinking? Now put the talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.



6 *If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an A.A. with you, keep some candy handy.*



7 *Don't think you have to stay late.* Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.



Worship in your own way.



9 *Don't sit around brooding.* Catch up on those books, museums, walks, and letters.



10 *Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations.* Remember—"one day at a time."



11 *Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy.* Maybe you cannot give material gifts—but this year, you can give love.



12 *"Having had a . . ." No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.*

Calendar of Events

Events listed here are presented solely as a service to readers, not as an endorsement by the General Service Office. For any additional information, please use the addresses provided.

December

10-12—*Myrtle Beach, South Carolina*. SE Reg. Forum. Write: Forum Coord., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163; Regionalforums@aa.org

January

7-9—*Dodge City, Kansas*. 41st SW Kansas Conf. Write: Ch., 2011 Campus Dr., Garden City, KS 67846; www.kansasaa.org

13-16—*Laughlin, Nevada*. 21st River Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 20326, Bullhead City, AZ 86439-0326; www.rcco-aa.org

14-16—*Montgomery, Alabama*. Area 1 Assembly. Write: Ch., 3981 N. W Street, Ste. 35, Pensacola, FL 32505; area1secretary@aaarea1.org

14-16—*Galveston, Texas*. 49th SETA Conv. Write: Ch., Box 8189, Galveston, TX 77553; www.aa-seta.org

20-23—*Raleigh, North Carolina*. 44th Tar Heel Mid-Winter Conf. Write: Ch., Box 18412, Raleigh, NC 27619-8412; ncconference@nc.rr.com

20-23—*Midland, Texas*. 41st Mid-Winter Conf. Write: Ch., Box 2504, Midland, TX 79701; www.nwta66.org

21-23—*Anchorage, Alaska*. All Alaska Roundup. Write: Ch., 5828 Katahdin Dr., Anchorage, AK 99502; www.allalaskaroundup.org

21-23—*Mankato, Minnesota*. Recovery, Unity, and Service Conf. Write: Ch., Box 2812, Minneapolis, MN 55402; altchairperson@area36.org

28-30—*Hilton Head, South Carolina*. Hilton Head Mid-Winter Conf. Write: Ch., Box 6256, Hilton Head, SC 29938; hhmidwinterconf@gmail.com

28-30—*Corpus Christi, Texas*. 57th Coastal Bend Jamboree. Write: Ch., Box 61000, Corpus Christi, TX 78466-1000; www.coastalbendjamboree.org

28-30—*Dallas, Texas*. 27 Reunión Zona Note de TX. Inf: Com. Org., 5415 Maple Ave., Ste 318, Dallas, TX 75235

February

4-6—*Penniac, New Brunswick, Canada*. Mid-Winter Roundup. Write: Ch., 81 Penniac Rd., Penniac, NB E3A 9B9; midwinterroundup@hotmail.com

4-6—*Ostend, Belgium*. 22nd North Sea Conv. Info: www.aa-europe.net

10-13—*Anchorage, Alaska*. 47th Internat'l Women's Conf. Write: Ch., Box 11-1438, Anchorage, AK 99511-1438; www.internationalwomensconference.org

11-13—*North Little Rock, Arkansas*. 29th Winter Holiday. Write: Ch., Box 26135, Little Rock, AR 72221; winterholiday@live.com

11-13—*Brawley, California*. Imperial Valley Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 393, El Centro, CA 92244

11-13—*Ligonier, Pennsylvania*. Ligonier Mid-Winter Spiritual Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 25, Blairsville, PA 15717; L.M.S.R@hughes.net

25-27—*Tarrytown, New York*. NERAASA. Write: Ch., Box 1, Malverne, NY 11565; www.neraasa.org

March

4-6—*Honolulu, Hawaii*. PRAASA. Write: Ch., Box 25777, Honolulu, HI 96825; www.praasa.org

17-20—*Ruston, Louisiana*. LA Upstate Conv. Write: Ch., Box 505, Ruston, LA 71273-0505; www.rustonaa.org

25-27—*Ames, Iowa*. Aim for Ames. Write: Ch., Box 2522, Ames, IA 50010; www.aim-forames.org

25-27—*Cherry Hill, New Jersey*. 47th Area 45 Gen. Svc. Conv. Write: Ch., Box 8603, Turnersville, NJ 08012; www.snjaaconvention.org

25-27—*Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*. 19th Area 60 Get Away Wknd. Write: Ch., Box 353, Warren, PA 16365; www.wpaarea60.org

April

1-3—*Lafayette, Louisiana*. Fellowship of the Spirit South. Write: Ch., Box 53312, Lafayette, LA 70505; www.fotssouth.com

1-3—*Niagara Falls, New York*. 3rd Cataract City Conv. Write: Ch., Box 2006, Niagara Falls, NY 14301

8-10—*North Conway, New Hampshire*. 45th Area 43 Conv. Write: Ch., 1330 Hooksett Rd, Hooksett, NH 03106; www.nhaa.net

8-10—*Montgomery, Alabama*. Area 1 Assembly. Write: Ch., 3981 N. W St., Ste. 35, Pensacola, FL 32505; area1secretary@aaarea1.org

15-17—*Fairmont, Minnesota*. Sunlight of the Spirit. Write: Ch., Box 748, Fairmont, MN 56031

21-24—*Perth, Western Australia*. 46th Nat'l Australian Conv. Write: Ch., Box 212, Hamilton Hill, WA 6963; www.aanatconperth2011.cjb.net

22-24—*New Haven, Connecticut*. 5th New Haven Spring Conf. Write: Ch., Box 791, North Haven, CT 06473; www.newhaven-springconference.com

29-1—*Chipley, Florida*. Chipley Country Roundup. Write: Ch., Box 677, Chipley, FL 32428; chipley_countryroundup@hotmail.com

Planning a Future Event?

To be included in the *Box 4-5-9* Calendar, information must be received at G.S.O. four months prior to the event. We list events of two or more days.

For your convenience and ours—please type or print the information to be listed on the Bulletin Board page, and mail to us:

Date of event: from _____ to _____, 20 _____

Name of event: _____

Place (city, state or prov.): _____

For information, write: (exact mailing address) _____

Contact phone # (for office use only): _____

Blanca Juarez Romero
M Singh

Susan LAUREN ROBERSON
Shawn Buckley

Linda
April

Ivy

Maudie
Elli
Mary D

Stem Quinn Pamela
Anke Wyrh
Juelle Foster-Daniel
ADRIANNE B.

J. J. Maglieri
Eva S.

L.H.
Sara Bang
Gaye S.P.
Michelle Min

Warren A.
Renée
Juaide
Michelle

A. Rivera
V. Alleyne

Robert Skittled
Valerie D.

James
Angela
Johanna Acosta
Andrea B. Fornie

Joe D. Dennon
Magdalena Ingrita

W. Kiehl
Mayse
William

Yee
Jim M.
Nadine

R. Hendricks
Margaret Mato

Queen
Maryclaud
Kellen

Sofia Leal
Thom
Catal
Luis Carrillo
Margarita de

April Higuer
Frank

Daniel Brown
Frank L. Small
Rebecca W.

HR. Jimi
Luis Carrillo
Margarita de